

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2015

AGENDA

- 1. Tuttle North Extension – IGS Parking Expansion 6100 Emerald Parkway
15-073AFDP Amended Final Development Plan (Approved 7 – 0)**
- 2. Indian Run Meadows PUD – Brookdale-Sign 7220 Muirfield Drive
15-078AFDP Amended Final Development Plan (Approved 7 – 0)**
- 3. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines
15-040ADM Administrative Request (Approved 7 – 0)**

The Chair, Victoria Newell, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Other Commission members present were: City Council Representative Amy Salay and Commissioners Robert Miller, Chris Brown, Cathy De Rosa, Steve Stidhem and Deborah Mitchell. City representatives present were: Phil Hartmann, Vincent Papsidero, Claudia Husak, Jenny Rauch, Joanne Shelly, Rachel Ray, Michael Hendershot, Donna Goss, and Flora Rogers.

Motion and Vote

Ms. Newell made a motion. Mr. Brown seconded, to accept the documents into the record. The vote was as follows: Ms. Salay, yes; Ms. De Rosa, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Mr. Brown, yes; and Ms. Newell, yes. (Approved 7 – 0)

Chair Newell said there were two cases eligible for the consent agenda this evening (Case 1 and 2). She said they will take the cases in the order of the published agenda. She briefly explained the rules and procedures of the Planning and Zoning Commission. [The minutes will reflect the published order.]

- 1. Tuttle North Extension – IGS Parking Expansion 6100 Emerald Parkway
15-073AFDP Amended Final Development Plan**

Ms. Newell said the following application is a request to construct an additional 70 parking spaces for the IGS office complex within the Tuttle North Extension PUD. She said the site is located on the east side of Emerald Parkway at the intersection of Innovation Drive and that this application is a request for review and approval of an Amended Final Development Plan under the provisions of Zoning Code Section 153.050. She swore in those who intended on addressing the Commission.

Ms. Newell said this is on the consent agenda and did not need a formal presentation.

Ms. Newell asked if there were anyone from the public that would like to speak to this application. [There were none.]

Motion and Vote

Chris Brown moved, Deborah Mitchell seconded, to approve this Amended Final Development Plan application because it meets all the applicable review criteria, with the seven conditions.

Ms. Newell asked the applicant if they agreed with the seven conditions:

- 1) The plans be revised to indicate the correct pavement setback of 30 feet on Emerald Parkway;
- 2) The applicant should work with Planning and Engineering to include additional sidewalk connections to the sidewalk located on the south side of the drive aisle;
- 3) The proposed light fixtures should match the existing in height, type and color;
- 4) The applicant will need to ensure the improvements comply with the stormwater management requirements during building permit review;
- 5) The applicant ensure the height of the mound located along Emerald Parkway adequately screens the proposed parking area, or additional mounding and plant material may need to be installed;
- 6) The northern end of the parking area should be screened adjacent to the park with evergreen or deciduous shrubs; and
- 7) The applicant should work with Planning to soften the appearance of the existing hot box adjacent to the proposed parking area with additional plant material.

*Anna Summers agreed to the above conditions.

The vote was as follows: Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Salay, yes; Ms. De Rosa, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; and Mr. Brown, yes. (Approved 7 – 0)

2. Indian Run Meadows PUD – Brookdale-Sign 15-078AFDP

7220 Muirfield Drive Amended Final Development Plan

Ms. Newell said the following application is a request for the construction of a new ground sign for an existing assisted living facility located on the east side on Muirfield Drive, 400 feet south of the intersection with Sells Mill Drive. She said this is a request for review and approval of an Amended Final Development Plan under the provisions of Zoning Code Section 153.050. She swore in those who intended on addressing the Commission.

Ms. Newell said this is on the consent agenda and did not need a formal presentation.

Ms. Newell asked if there were anyone from the public that would like to speak to this application. [There were none.]

Ms. De Rosa asked to see an image of the sign.

Ms. Rauch showed the image of the proposed sign.

Mr. Stidhem said it seemed to be significantly smaller than the sign adjacent to the facility.

Ms. Rauch said a nursing facility is permitted less square footage than a shopping center.

Mr. Stidhem said he is only concerned with the blue color and stated it is not a hang up and thought it would clash but being part of their brand it is only a minor concern.

Ms. Newell asked if the applicant agreed with the five conditions:

- 1) The "Muirfield" copy and the associated secondary image will need to be changed to match the blue "Brookdale" copy to meet the three color limitation;

- 2) The applicant work with Planning to locate the sign to the north side of the existing stone wall;
- 3) The applicant ensure the final sign location is out of any easements and does not conflict with any existing utilities in the area;
- 4) The sign base and column be altered to incorporate limestone in lieu of the proposed metal cabinet; and
- 5) The plans should be revised to show the required landscape material around the base of the sign, with the submission of a sign permit.

*Philip Radke agreed to the above conditions and clarified where the stone base would be required.

Ms. Newell asked that staff clarify the portion of the sign to have a stone base.

Ms. Rauch agreed to make it clearer.

Mr. Radke asked if they could use a synthetic stone base because many of the signs are a foam compressed material.

Ms. Rauch said it could be a manufactured stone, which is permitted.

Mr. Brown clarified that it should be a limestone native to Dublin meeting the character of the rest of the area.

Mr. Radke agreed.

Motion and Vote

Chris Brown moved, Steve Stidhem seconded, to approve this Amended Final Development Plan application because the proposed sign modifications meet the requirements within the Indian Run Meadows development text, and are consistent with surrounding signs with five conditions. The vote was as follows: Ms. De Rosa, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; Ms. Newell, yes; Ms. Salay, yes; Mr. Miller, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; and Mr. Miller, yes. (Approved 7 – 0)

3. Bridge Street District Sign Guidelines 15-040ADM

Administrative Request

Ms. Newell said the application is a request to create a set of sign guidelines intended to help applicants understand and apply the sign requirements in the Bridge Street District and provide direction for sign design and placement in a pedestrian-oriented environment.

Rachel Ray stated that the intent of the sign guidelines was to assist applicants with preparing their application materials when they are proposing signs within the Bridge Street District. She said they are also intended to illustrate the intent of the zoning regulations. She explained that once the guidelines are in effect, they will be used by applicants as they are preparing their sign design proposals, as well as by Staff in evaluating and making recommendations on the proposals. She noted that the reviewing bodies are also expected to use the guidelines as a guiding document when reviewing applications for signs. She reiterated that it is tailored for signs in pedestrian oriented environments.

Ms. Ray said that City Council approved the most recent round of Bridge Street District Code updates including some amendments to the sign provisions in December 2014. She reported that as a follow up, Staff was tasked with preparing sign guidelines to help illustrate the intent of those requirements. She said they worked with a sign design consultant as they were reviewing the Code Amendments, and the consultant's recommendation was that the sign requirements in the Zoning Code went about as far as

possible when it comes to regulating for creative and high quality signs that everyone wants to see in the Bridge Street District. She reported that the consultant recommended that the best approach is to show the intent of the Zoning Code regulations through the sign guidelines. She recalled that the Planning and Zoning Commission and Architectural Review Board (ARB) reviewed the draft guidelines in June 2015, and the ARB and Administrative Review Team reviewed the final version last week, both of whom recommended approval to the Commission with conditions related to a few minor changes to wording.

Ms. Ray said since the June review, Planning added a 6th Character Principle, "Context," which is an important factor particularly in the Historic District as well as the Bridge Street District as a whole. She said they added a "preface" which is the first two pages in the document to show at a glance what about the entire document is about. She said at the June meeting, the Commission had discussed the idea of having "tech savvy" signs, and opportunities for more futuristic signs that keep up with new technologies, and she tried to address those considerations in the preface. She noted that these would more than likely still require Master Sign Plan review if something very different were to be proposed.

Ms. Ray said the ARB had also recommended that there be additional references to the Historic District throughout the document.

Ms. Ray said Planning modified the outline of the document to make it more user friendly. She provided a brief overview of the six Character Principles (Architectural Integration, Illumination, Colors & Secondary Images, Graphic Design & Composition, Dimensionality, and Context). She reiterated that for the Sign Requirements section of the document, there is a two-page layout for the different types of signs illustrating how to measure signs, along with a summary of the requirements for the Historic District and elsewhere in the Bridge Street District. She referred to the photos of good examples of each type of sign, accompanied by a brief description of what it is that makes it a successful example, and pointed out that examples of "what to avoid" had also been included.

Ms. Ray said that a recommendation of approval to City Council is requested this evening, unless there are further comments by the Commission.

Ms. Newell asked if there was anyone from the public that would like to speak with respect to this application. [There were none.]

Mr. Brown referred to page 15 and the reference to the use of pressure sensitive vinyl. He asked if this was intended to be used for permanent window signs that serve as the primary identification for a tenant, rather than for temporary window sticker signs.

Ms. Ray confirmed it is intended for the permanent permitted signs.

Mr. Brown noted that sandwich board signs are permitted in the Historic District but not in the rest of the Bridge Street District, and asked why.

Ms. Ray said there had been some internal debate about where the sandwich board signs should be permitted. She said historically they have been permitted only in the Historic District to set apart that particular area as a unique character element. She said limiting the signs to this particular area also makes them easier to manage because sandwich board signs can get out of control. She added that they are primarily used in highly pedestrian-oriented areas, which has historically been just the Historic District in Dublin. She said the City has kept them limited to the Historic District primarily for those reasons. She said now that walkable, mixed-use development is planned for a much larger area through the entire Bridge Street District, Planning has discussed whether sandwich board signs would be appropriate throughout the BSD, rather than continuing to limit them to the Historic District where they will remain a unique character element. She said regardless, for the time being, the Code only allows sandwich board signs in the Historic District, as before, although anyone can request sandwich board signs through the

Master Sign Plan process, where the Commission can get a better idea about where they will be permitted and what they are going to look like.

Mr. Brown referred to a common urban condition where restaurants have menu signs on display close to the sidewalk, or a hostess stand with a sign to describe a special, and asked if those would be permitted.

Ms. Ray said the menu signs would likely be considered directory signs, which would not require a permit if they meet Code. She said if they wanted to do a bigger sign, or something different like a sandwich board in the sidewalk area, they would only be permitted as part of a Master Sign Plan.

Mr. Brown asked about valet signs.

Ms. Ray said currently there are no requirements for valet signs in the Code. She said that as these types of signs come forward, Staff will need to evaluate how they are regulated. She said currently, they are being dealt with on a case by case basis in the Historic District, but she expects they will be part of the urban environment.

Ms. Salay asked about host stands that sometimes have signs on the front, and how those will be reviewed, or whether they will be permitted.

Ms. Ray said there is no requirement in the Code for these types of signs because we have not had enough experience with them to determine a good standard to apply, or how they should or should not be regulated.

Mr. Brown asked the liability with the "sign spinners."

Mr. Hartmann said they will continue to study the issue and figure out a uniform way to apply the regulation, based on a recent Supreme Court decision.

Mr. Stidhem asked if the "spinning signs" should be referenced in the guidelines or in Code.

Ms. Ray said they are already prohibited by Code as "off premise signs" or signs with movable elements, and typically Code Enforcement is sent to address the situation.

Ms. Newell said the text is well written. She said if she was submitting a project and was looking at the text, she said she thought it would be very easy to follow. She said she liked the layout and thought the document was clean and concise. She said she felt like if she knew nothing about the Bridge Street District that the document did a great job explaining what it is and what types of signs are envisioned.

Ms. Salay agreed and said she liked the "pattern book" approach. She pointed out that the Bridge Street Code allows for two ground signs and a wall sign in some areas, which is more than any place else in the City. She asked why this area was approved for more signs.

Ms. Ray said when Planning was looking at the appropriate number of permitted signs to propose when drafting the Code, they considered that in most areas of the BSD, there will not be a lot of space on site to have a ground sign, and if there is, it will be small or might identify a building from a different street. She said there have been a lot of challenges where they have buildings with larger setbacks, or when an Existing Structure with larger setbacks proposes signs. She said generally, it was intended to help pedestrians find where they are going, as well as vehicles. She noted that the sizes for both wall and ground signs are usually smaller than they would be permitted to be elsewhere in the city, which was also discussed during the Code review.

Ms. Salay said she is a proponent of restrictive sign codes, and in a pedestrian environment, she is more open to more creative signs with completely different types of illumination that might not be appropriate elsewhere in Dublin, such as illuminating the sidewalks in front of a business. She asked about the typical plastic sign cases that are internally illuminated with metal around the edges, often with a stone base, and asked how those types of signs would be reviewed in the Bridge Street District.

Ms. Ray said that type of design would be permitted by Code if all other material and dimensional requirements are met. She said that as they have had those types of signs proposed, they have encouraged applicants to make sure that they are at least three dimensional and a little more creative than just a cabinet or a box.

Ms. Salay asked if the Code should be amended to discourage these types of signs if they are not desirable in this District.

Ms. Ray said it is difficult to prohibit a certain type or category of signs across the board. She noted this was what the sign consultants were talking about when they noted that it's difficult to go much further to regulate signs to achieve the type of quality and character desired in the BSD, or anywhere else in Dublin. She said a Code amendment would have to be very specific about the specific aspects of cabinet signs or channel letters that should be restricted, but Planning can review. She said someone could come along and make that very type of sign look unique and interesting. She said the intent of the guidelines is to help sign designers get creative and propose unique signs in this area. She said that how the guidelines will be useful, in directing the design intent where the Code is more limited.

Ms. Salay said she is open to changing the Code or however they can steer applicants in the right direction.

Ms. Newell said the guidelines state that if they are intended to help the Administrative Review Team and the other reviewing bodies make a judgement on sign design beyond simply looking at whether the signs comply with the zoning requirements. She pointed out the guidelines specifically state that signs need to be dimensional, among other things. She said all of those things have come from their discussions about how to regulate the design because they are asking for something both highly creative and highly subjective.

Ms. Ray agreed, and said that Staff can continue to evaluate the requirements.

Ms. De Rosa said the text on page 7 regarding the "Purpose of the Guidelines" could be moved to page 4 where it will be more prominent. She thought the language was very clear about the intent for quality, excellence, and unique design.

Ms. Mitchell agreed with Ms. De Rosa.

Ms. De Rosa said she liked the "preface" on pages 2 and 3. She said at the last meeting, the phrase "sophisticated eclectic" was stated, and thought it was a nice phrase because well done urban environments are both eclectic and sophisticated at the same time, and that is what they are talking about. She referred to the "Clear Message" characteristic on page 3 and said that the picture would work equally well for "Sophisticated Eclectic"

Mr. Brown agreed.

Ms. De Rosa said the sign size requirements are very specific and asked how some of the really interesting signs shown on pages 2 and 3 that are more like public art installations would be regulated.

Ms. Newell said that is what a Master Sign Plan is for. She said if a sign goes beyond the requirements of the Code, they have the option of seeking a Master Sign Plan, which would be approved by the Commission or the ARB.

Ms. Salay asked how many signs are likely to move forward as a Master Sign Plan, as opposed to going to ART for approval of something that meets all Code requirements.

Ms. Ray said that although the Commission has made it clear that they encourage Master Sign Plans for creative signs, and the process will be as streamlined as possible, she is concerned that many applicants will opt for signs that meet all of the Code requirements so they can get an ART approval within a shorter period of time. She noted however that there will be projects that *require* Master Sign Plans based on their locations within a shopping corridor, such as Bridge Park.

Ms. De Rosa asked for the likelihood of businesses changing their signs to something more creative, now that the guidelines will be able to inform them of the possibility that they can potentially go above and beyond what they currently have.

Ms. Ray said car dealerships are a good example – many car dealerships have very specific branding requirements, and many even receive incentives for implementing corporate branding with their signs and buildings. She said national retailers are similar, and for these types of businesses, they are not likely to go too far beyond the norm. She said when Staff has the opportunity to have a conversation with applicants and businesses in advance, they try to steer them in the right direction. She said resources like the guidelines will be a big help with getting the message out.

Ms. De Rosa suggested a proactive approach to getting the guidelines out to existing businesses to raise the bar, to at least give them the option.

Ms. Salay cautioned that many existing businesses received their sign approvals under the Corridor Development District regulations, and now that they are under the Bridge Street District regulations, it would be interesting to see how the signs would change.

Ms. Newell agreed that some applicants have had a hard time getting their signs approved, and when they see these new types of signs going in they are going to wonder why they could not have had a similar sign. She said as an architect, she has designed a lot of signs and said she couldn't say she always put a great deal of design importance on the signs themselves. She said she often just wanted to make sure the signs matched the buildings and complied with Code.

Ms. Salay said that it seems there might still be some barriers in getting the creativity they are seeking, and since graphic designs are not always involved in sign applications.

Ms. Ray said a lot of this comes down to education. She said as applicants come in with new projects they will have the opportunity to set expectations, but she worries more about the existing shopping center owners or tenants.

Ms. Newell said if she had the guidelines to reference, as an architect, she thought she would be able to do some cool things in an affordable manner, since many of the signs in the document are very simple. She said many restaurants for example have graphic designers create their menus and logos. She said there is potential to get what we want out of applicants, and acknowledged that it is harder for Staff and the Administrative Review Team to make the judgement calls.

Ms. Ray said they have already started conversations with existing projects.

Ms. Husak said they have shared the draft guidelines with potential applicants, where they can use them as an example of what the City is looking for. She said the ones that embrace the guidelines have indicated they are looking for very unique signs.

Ms. Mitchell asked if it would help to have case studies showing that well-designed signs can translate to higher revenue and sales. She suggested if there was greater awareness of the benefits of creative signs, it might help make the case for better signs in this area. She said she would try to share the studies with Staff.

Ms. Newell asked if there were additional comments from the Commissioners. [There were none.]

Ms. Newell asked if the comments, made by the Commission could be incorporated into the recommendation.

Ms. Ray suggested a condition that the comments discussed regarding the text changes are incorporated into the draft document forwarded to City Council.

Motion and Vote

Victoria Newell moved, Chris Brown seconded, to recommend approval to City Council for this Administrative Request with one condition:

- 1) That the modifications discussed by the Commission regarding the text changes and sign characteristics are forwarded to City Council in the final draft.

The vote was as follows: Mr. Miller, yes; Ms. Mitchell, yes; Ms. Salay, yes; Ms. De Rosa, yes; Mr. Stidhem, yes; Mr. Brown, yes; and Ms. Newell, yes. (Approved 7 – 0)

Communications

Ms. Husak said they are excited to have Vince Papsidero on board.

Ms. Salay said that City Council discussed the Home2 Hotel at their last meeting. She said there were lots of discussion and was in agreement with the changes to be reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission. She said it will be interesting with the property being added into the Economic Development Agreement after it had already been so far in the review process.

Mr. Miller asked what Council thought of the design as it existed.

Ms. Salay said there was some spirited discussion and thought it would be best to review the meeting minutes. She said they will see the changes based on Council comments in the next submittal from the applicant.

Ms. Mitchell asked if they have a public restaurant.

Ms. Husak said they do not have a public restaurant.

Ms. Shelly said they offer a breakfast bar and is not a full service restaurant.

Mr. Miller asked if they will have the ODOT plans prior to the review of Home2 Hotel.

Ms. Husak said those right-of-way plans are not finished.

Mr. Hendershot said the right-of-way plans have been finalized for the project.

Ms. Salay asked to see those with the Home2 Hotel review.

Ms. Newell said if there were no further comments the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

As approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission on September 17, 2015.